

Chapter 8

Signs

A. Introduction

Signage can have a dramatic impact on the visual character of a city. Restrained and tasteful signage conveys an orderly and quality appearance which complements project design and enhances the City's image. Excessive signage or illegible signage degrades the visual quality of the environment.

The sign design guidelines in this chapter encourage the highest level of sign design quality while allowing maximum flexibility.

Site specific standards and guidelines shall take precedence when in conflict with the following guidelines. Where such standards or guidelines are silent, these guidelines will serve as a supplement.

B. General Design Objectives

The sign design for projects in Huntington Beach should:

- Provide creative, high quality signage that positively contributes in the improvement of the visual environment, expression of local character, and development of a distinctive City image
- Enhance the building's architectural design
- Consider the scale proportions and character of signage in the immediate vicinity



Canopy sign



Projecting sign



Awning Signage

C. General Sign Design Guidelines

- a. Building and freestanding signs should be compatible with the predominant visual elements of the project architecture.
- b. Sign size should be complementary to the proportion and scale of the building and its elements.
- c. Creative wall and freestanding signage which identifies and accentuate building entries is encouraged.
- d. Use of figurative signage is encouraged.



Figurative signs are encouraged

- e. Overly intricate typefaces should be avoided.
- f. Sign colors and materials should be selected to contribute to the signs legibility. Excessive use of colors is not acceptable.
- g. Freestanding signs should be placed within landscaped area(s), perpendicular to approaching traffic and positioned to provide clear lines of sight at intersections and driveway approaches.

1. Color

- a. Use of colors is one of the primary means of visual communication. Excessive or uncoordinated use of colors in sign design can confuse and/ or negate the message of a sign. Restrained use of colors is encouraged.
- b. Sign design should consider the visual impacts of color contrast in achieving legible and aesthetically pleasing signage.



Use of contrasting colors can enhance sign legibility

- c. Color accents should be used to create unique and attractive signage and enhance sign legibility. Large sign areas with multiple colors are discouraged.



Use of many colors can be confusing

- d. Colors or color combinations that interfere with the legibility of the sign copy should be avoided.

- e. Multi-tenant freestanding signs should utilize one uniform sign background color for all tenant signage.
- f. Bright fluorescent colors are distracting and should be generally avoided. Limited use of fluorescent colors may be acceptable if they are well integrated within the overall sign design.



Limited use of fluorescent colors is acceptable

2. Materials

- a. The following materials are recommended for signs in Huntington Beach:
 - Wood (carved, sandblasted, etched and properly sealed, primed and painted, or stained).



Well designed wood sign



Well designed metal Sign

- High-density pre-formed foam, if properly designed in a manner consistent with these guidelines, and painted or otherwise finished to compliment the building architecture
- Metal (formed, etched, cast, engraved, and properly primed and painted or factory coated to protect against corrosion)
- Custom neon tubing, when used as an accent in conjunction with other sign types

3. Sign Copy/ Lettering Style/ Spacing

- a. Limit the number of lettering styles in order to increase legibility. The number of different lettering types should be limited to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs.
- b. Avoid spacing letters and words too close together. Crowding of letters, words or lines decreases legibility.



The fewer words, the more effective the sign



Lettering style should complement building architecture



The use of symbols and logos in the place of words is encouraged

- c. Signs with brief succinct messages are encouraged because they can be read quickly and are more attractive.
- d. Use symbols and logos in the place of words whenever appropriate. Pictographic images usually register more quickly in the viewer's mind than a written message.
- e. Avoid hard-to-read, overly intricate typefaces and symbols.

4. Sign Illumination

- a. Whenever indirect lighting fixtures are used, care should be taken to properly shield the light source to prevent glare from spilling over into residential areas and any public right-of-way.
- b. Signs comprised of individual letters are better integrated with building architecture. Individually illuminated letters, either internally illuminated or backlit solid letters (reverse channel) are encouraged. Internally illuminated cabinet sign are discouraged.



Architecturally compatible indirect sign lighting is encouraged

5. Placement

- a. Signs should be placed near the main business entrance, should not project above the edge of the rooflines and should not obstruct windows and/or doorways.



Avoid placing wall signs over windows

D. Wall and Building Signs*Well designed "Wall sign"*

- a. Wall signs should not project from the surface upon which they are attached by more than the minimum required distance for construction purposes and in no case by more than 12 inches.
- b. Internally illuminated can signs are strongly discouraged. Internally illuminated, individually cut channel letters are acceptable.
- c. Reverse channel letter signs are encouraged.
- d. Wall signs painted directly on the structure are encouraged.
- e. Lettering should not occupy more than 75% of the background area.
- f. Wall sign placement should be coordinated with architectural features.
- g. Prefabricated building fascia corporate signs are not acceptable.

E. Projecting Signs

- a. Projecting signs should be at least 12 ft. above finished floor.
- b. Sign supports and brackets should be compatible with the design and scale of the sign.
- c. The maximum allowable sign area for projecting signs should be 6 sq. ft.

- d. External illumination of projecting signs is encouraged.
- e. The text, copy, or logo face should not exceed 75% of the sign background.
- f. Projecting signs should be attached at a 90 degree angle from the face of the building.

*Well designed "Projecting sign"***F. Window Signs***Well designed "Window sign"*

- a. Window signs (permanent) should not cover more than 20% of the area of each window.
- b. Window signs should be limited to individual letter signs and logos. Glass-mounted graphic logos may be applied by silk screening or pre-spaced vinyl die-cut forms.

G. Awning Signs

- a. Awnings should not be internally illuminated. Downward directed lighting that does not illuminate the awning is allowed.
- b. Sign or logo areas should not occupy more than 30% of the awning panel.
- c. Additional lettering may appear on the awning valance (flaps).



Lettering may appear on the awning valance

H. Freestanding Monument Signs

- a. All freestanding signs should be monument type. Pole or pylon signs are strongly discouraged.
- b. A minimum of 10% of the sign face area of a freestanding monument sign should be dedicated to “in scale” address identification. Multi-tenant development should display the range of address numbers on the sign.
- c. Each sign should incorporate a 2 ft. high (min) base. The base materials should match those utilized on the development it serves.
- d. Freestanding monument sign should be setback from the public right-of-way a minimum of 1 ft.



An architecture base is strongly encouraged on all freestanding signs



Well designed monumental sign in Downtown Huntington Beach



Pole or pylon signs are discouraged

